

It is a species little known outside Jamaica, and is restricted there to the mountainous interior. It is one of the plants that live vegetatively for a number of years and then flower and die. *Agave americana* ("century plant") is the most commonly cited illustration of this habit. The bamboos are notable for this kind of periodicity, the number of years of vegetative activity before flowering varying widely in different forms. Apparently, when flowering occurs, most of the individuals of a region are involved, and presently all the mature plants are dead, and the ground occupied by seedlings. SEIFRIZ had an opportunity to observe the flowering condition of *Chusquea abietifolia* in 1918, and the records available showed that the previous flowering condition had occurred 33 years before. The explanation of this behavior is not available as yet, for seasonal factors controlling such long periods are very unlikely.—J. M. C.

Mosaic disease of spinach.—Investigations of JODIDI, MOULTON, and MARKLEY,¹² of the Bureau of Plant Industry, have shown that "spinach plants, especially their tops, affected with mosaic disease, have a smaller percentage of total nitrate, acid amide, mono and diamino nitrogen, but a somewhat larger percentage of ammonia than normal plants, nitrous acid being present in diseased plants only. This is due to the fact that denitrification takes place whereby nitrates are reduced to nitrites which, reacting on various nitrogenous compounds present in the spinach, bring about elimination of nitrogen in a free state, involving also loss of nitrogen in the form of ammonia."

It will be very interesting to know how generally in physiological diseases of plants and in viris and other disorders denitrification is involved.¹³—WM. CROCKER.

Leaching of nitrates.—Working with uncropped and unmanured soils RUSSELL and RICHARDS¹⁴ conclude that "the nitrate in drainage water accounts for practically all the nitrogen lost from the soil. The uncertainty attaching to the estimated figures and to the actual amount of new nitrogen in the rainfall deprives the balance sheet of precision, but there is no room for much fixation or loss of gaseous nitrogen. The chief, if not the sole action, in this soil when there is no manure, crop residues, or fresh supply of organic matter, is the production of nitrate. It is in these circumstances that the nitrogen cycle is seen at its simplest. We know from other Rothamsted experiments that the cycle becomes more complex when organic matter is added to the soil, both fixation and loss of nitrogen being then liable to occur."—WM. CROCKER.

¹² JODIDI, S. L., MOULTON, S. C., and MARKLEY, K. S., The mosaic disease of spinach as characterized by its nitrogen constituents. Jour. Am. Chem. Soc. 42:1061-1070. 1920.

¹³ BOT. GAZ. 65:199-200. 1918.

¹⁴ RUSSELL, E. J., and RICHARDS, E. H., The washing out of nitrates by drainage water from uncropped and unmanured land. Jour. Agric. Sci. 10:22-43. 1919.